

25 JUL 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
SUBJECT : Publications Survey

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation submitted for DCI approval. Such recommendation is contained in paragraph 4.

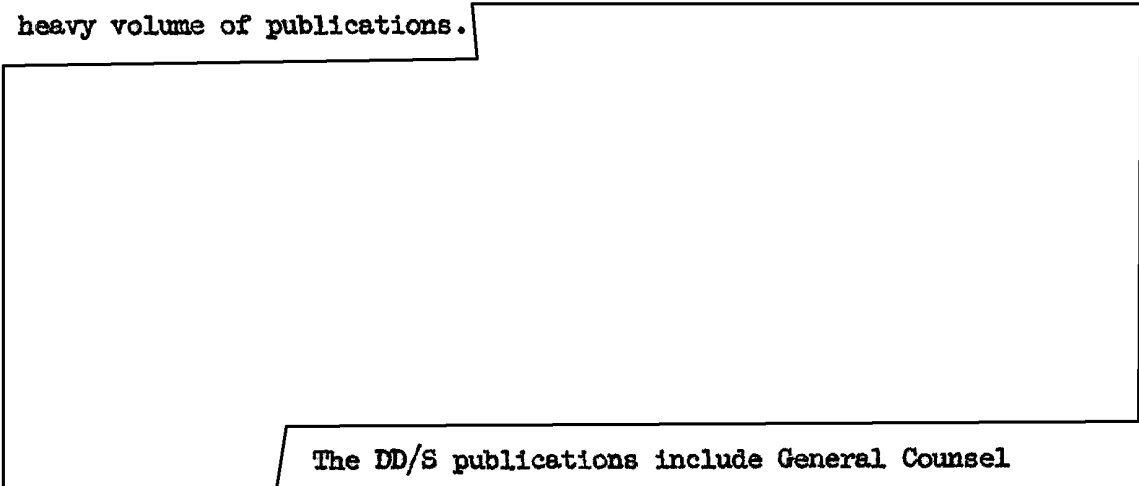
2. The staff of the Inspector General has completed a preliminary survey of Agency publications. Information developed to date indicates that:

a. In December 1951, you assigned responsibility for the coordination of all intelligence publications to the Assistant Director/Intelligence Coordination (see Tab A attached). Under this assignment of responsibility the present categories and format of DD/I intelligence publications were established. However, with the abolition of the Office of Intelligence Coordination in 1953 centralized Agency responsibility for the coordination of intelligence publications apparently ceased to exist. Only in the DD/I has an effort at centralized review been continued.

b. Past studies on the publications problem have been limited essentially to finished intelligence and have failed to consider many other important publications--especially in the DD/P area. If real progress is to be made in systematizing Agency publications, then all serial documents which circulate beyond the confines of any one Deputy area must be included in the definition of publications.

c. Under the foregoing definition of publications the magnitude of the Agency's effort is staggering. The DD/I alone lists approximately 100 serial publications ranging from documents produced on a daily basis to those produced irregularly. The listing includes many information reports and factual compilations but does not include a number of Top Secret and code word publications. A sampling consisting of one issue of each of the DD/I publications (listed in Tab B) nearly fills two drawers in a standard four-drawer safe.

d. Although no official records of serial publications in the DD/P and DD/S exist, experience in IG surveys indicates a similar heavy volume of publications.



The DD/S publications include General Counsel Opinions, Training Bulletins and Catalogues, Support Bulletins, and Communications Instructions to mention but a few.

e. There seems little doubt that the number of current publications could be significantly reduced by mergers and consolidations or through outright cancellations. Improvements in existing format and content likewise appear necessary and desirable in many instances; for example, [redacted] have been produced and circulated in a variety of forms both within and without

the Agency. Some of these studies make no reference to CIA and contain no statement of source or other information on the nature and origin of the document (see Tab C attached). Without some centralized review and control, such variations in the pattern of Agency publications appear inescapable.

f. Recommendations for changes in existing publications can only be made after the most thorough evaluation, not only of the publications themselves but also of the objectives, purposes and consumer requirements for the information contained in these publications. Publications frequently represent the basic justification for the existence of producing units, and recommendations directed at such publications must be carefully reasoned if they are to produce concrete results rather than bitter objections. In short, publications are not separate entities in themselves but rather reflect the basic substantive operations and efforts of the various components of the Agency.

3. The information reflected in the foregoing paragraph indicates that a one-time survey of Agency publications will not in itself correct the present deficiencies on a long-term basis. Definitive improvements will only be obtained through a centralized effort established on a permanent basis. The primarily substantive nature of publications indicates that the Deputies should participate actively in any review of the present situation and in the establishment of any central coordinating mechanism. The DD/I as the Deputy responsible for the production of finished intelligence appears most logically qualified to lead such a centralized Agency

publications review and control effort. Such a centralized mechanism would also materially strengthen the Agency's hand in efforts to coordinate the multitude of intelligence publications emanating from other IAC agencies.

4. It is recommended that you direct the establishment of an Agency Publications Board to be chaired by the DD/I with senior representation from each of the other Deputy areas and authorized to review, coordinate, control, improve and systematize all Agency publications as defined in Paragraph 2.b. above.

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Acting Inspector General

APPROVED:

*See Deputies' Meeting Minutes*

*DM-5-91*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Central Intelligence

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Attachments:

Tab A - Attached to all copies.

Tab B and C - Attached to Orig only.

cc: DDCI

ILLEGIB

18 December 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: Each Assistant Director

SUBJECT : Examination of Intelligence Publications

1. In order to provide more systematic handling of the initiation of new intelligence publications in the Agency, the Assistant Director for Intelligence Coordination has been assigned the responsibility for insuring that:

a. The publication of information contained in the issuance is within the functional cognizance of CIA and the originating Office.

b. The publication is properly coordinated and integrated with other intelligence publications issued by both CIA and other intelligence agencies.

c. The requirements of intelligence consumers are most efficiently and economically satisfied.

2. In discharging this responsibility the AD/IC will consult with both producers of the publication and end-users on the substantive aspects of the publication in question and with the Advisor for Management on functional and other administrative aspects. He will also insure that the interests of this Agency and other agencies are reconciled.

3. In the event of disagreement the AD/IC will refer the problem, fully documented, to the DDCI for decision.

4. AD/IC will be responsible for conducting periodic review of existing intelligence publications with the parties concerned and report semi-annually to the DCI on the status of the Agency's intelligence publications.

/s/ Allen W. Dulles  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

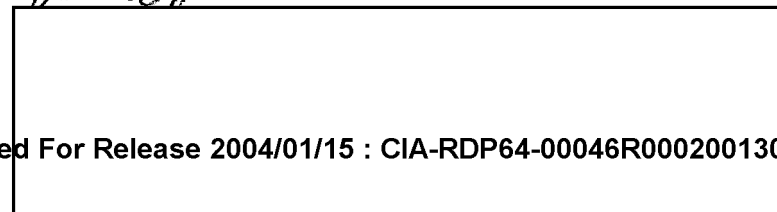
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OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR



*Suspense 26  
Aug. meeting to  
see progress of  
Committee under  
DDI chain to  
draft its directive*



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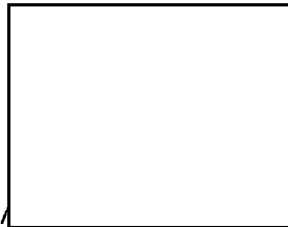
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Gen. Truscott

Subject: Publications Survey

At some point in the future a community wide survey of intelligence publications would be a good thing and might well lead to overall savings in cost, improvement in quality and a bringing together of the community at one more point.

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

FYI: Distribution on this includes a copy for each of the DD's.

Chris

Dep. meet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101  
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

Re suspense on Publications Survey, General Cabell has approved draft regulation which is now being readied for final form. Will send the attached to file.

ekt 4 Nov



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S-E-C-R-E-T

CIA INTERNAL USE ONLY

Number 3

B

S E R I A L P U B L I C A T I O N S

of the

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (INTELLIGENCE)

(Preliminary)

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF CENTRAL REFERENCE

C I A L I B R A R Y

June 1957

S-E-C-R-E-T

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THE POPULAR FRONT IN FRANCE

C

September 1956

## THE POPULAR FRONT IN FRANCE

### CONTENTS

A. The Birth of the Popular Front	page 1
B. The Life of the Popular Front	8
C. The Death of the Popular Front	15
D. The Trade Union Merger	21
Appendix A: Suggested Bibliography	A-1
Appendix B: Notes	B-1
Appendix C: Principal Sources	C-1

## THE POPULAR FRONT IN FRANCE

### A. The Birth of the Popular Front

The Popular Front concept, as an official policy of the Communist International (Comintern), was laid down by Georgi Dimitrov at the Comintern's VII Congress, which was held in Moscow in July-August 1935. As Dimitrov explained it, Communists, in order to resist the threat of Fascism at home and abroad, and especially the threat of Fascist Germany to the Soviet Union, were to combine not only with the masses but also with the Social Democrats as well as any non-Socialist or even right-wing groups opposed to Fascism. This was a major reversal of policy, for the Communists had until that moment looked upon Socialists as their principal enemies and had never ceased to revile them as traitors to the interests of the working classes.

It is generally stated that the Popular Front which thereafter came into being in France and took over the government in June 1936 was the result of the new Dimitrov line. While the Blum government undoubtedly expressed the objective of this policy, it was the result of purely French political developments which had begun at least a year and a half before Dimitrov made his speech. At the Comintern Congress the agreement already reached in France by the Communists and Socialists was held up as a model to the other Communist parties.

In France relations between the Communists and Socialists had been extremely bitter since the VI (1928) Comintern Congress. The French Socialists were supported by the bulk of the French workers, while the Communists were a small implacable faction. By 1934, however, they had come to share two things: a desire to extend their influence among labor, and a dislike--even a fear--of the rightist governments then dominating France and of the rising French Fascist groups.

The economic depression, which came somewhat later to France than to the rest of Europe, resulted in especially severe economic hardships for the French workers, who were less protected by social legislation than the workers of most European states, and created a more bitter feeling than perhaps had ever been known in France. The opportunity was not ignored by the Communists, who eagerly fanned this feeling in an effort to regain prestige they had lost in preceding years and even to displace the Socialists as the principal champion and acknowledged leader of the French worker.

At the same time, exploiting the discontent existing among all groups of the population but especially among the lower middle class, and pointing to the examples of Germany and Italy, Fascist organizations made their appearance in France and won considerable support. The growth and activity during 1934 of such groups as the royalist Camelots du Roi, Action Francaise, Coty's Solidarite Francaise, Taittinger's Jeunesse Patriotes, and Count de la Rocque's Croix de Feu made many leftists apprehensive of the possibilities of a Fascist coup. The Fascists were helped by the Stavisky scandal with its lurid revelations of corruption in high places and the implication of influential politicians, including some from the Radical Party of the then Premier, Camille Chautemps.

The scandal, followed by the death of Stavisky at Chamonix near the Swiss border--called suicide by the police but believed by many to have been murder to prevent the implication of additional government personages--forced Chautemps to resign. Another Radical, Daladier, was then called upon to form a new government. On 6 February 1934, when he was scheduled to present his program to the Chamber of Deputies, the Fascists decided to act. Mobs of rightists stormed the Palais de Bourbon 1 in an effort to overthrow the government.

The attempt was a vain one, but it served to show the leftists how real the Fascist danger was. The first move in the series that eventually led to the formation of the Popular Front occurred two days later when a joint Socialist-Communist-Radical Socialist demonstration was staged in Paris. At this point the desire for unity was still felt only superficially. When the rightist Doumergue was called upon to form a government immediately following the 6 February riots, the Socialist-led Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT - General Confederation of Labor) ordered a nation-wide general strike for 12 February. The Communists, not willing to remain aloof from this demonstration of popular will but equally unwilling to permit the Socialists to provide the leadership, decided that their Confederation Generale du Travail Unitaire (CGTU - General Confederation of United Labor), while not technically joining the CGT appeal, should launch a parallel appeal, thereby making it possible for the Communists to claim a share in the success of the strike.

The initiative for unity of action between the Socialists and Communists came from the latter. On 31 May 1934, the Communist organ L'Humanite published an open letter to "Socialist workers and branches" and to the "Permanent Administrative Committee of the Socialist Party," calling for joint anti-Fascist action and demonstrations, especially as regards efforts to secure the release of Ernst Thaelmann, a condemned German Communist. A similar letter was addressed

to the Socialists by the French Communist Party (FCP) on 5 June. Then on 23 June, the FCP Congress, meeting at Ivry, addressed an official offer to the permanent national board of the Socialist Party to conclude a pact against the Fascist menace.

The offer placed the Socialists in a dilemma. They disliked and distrusted the Communists, and strongly resented the virulent abuse of Socialists which still filled the pages of the Communist press. Nevertheless, they were keenly aware of the danger posed by French Fascism and could not ignore the potential strength which united action would lend. The proposal for joint action on behalf of Thaelmann was particularly hard to refuse, however suspicious they might be of the Communists, for Thaelmann was then a symbol of Fascist persecution. The party was also under strong pressure to accept from its Paris section, which was controlled by the extreme left wing of the party.

On 5 June, the Socialist Executive, with only three votes in opposition, decided to accept the Communist invitation, but it demanded as a condition that the Communist attacks on Socialist leaders cease as long as cooperation continued. This assurance was given in a letter dated 2 July, whereupon the Socialist Executive on 15 July agreed to conclude a United Action Pact. Delegates of the two parties met on 27 July and agreed on the terms of the pact which they then signed.

The pact provided that the two parties would jointly strive to (1) mobilize the population against the Fascist groups, and disarm them; (2) defend democratic liberties, secure proportional representation, and a dissolution of the Chamber; (3) combat preparations for war; (4) combat decree laws; and (5) combat Fascist terror in Germany and Austria, and secure the release of Thaelmann, Karl Seitz, and of all imprisoned anti-Fascists. To achieve these aims, each party agreed to organize jointly meetings and demonstrations, utilizing party organizations, press, members, and elected representatives. Each pledged to refrain from insults and attacks on the other, although each party could denounce those who violated the agreement. It was specifically provided that controversies over tactics and doctrines would be permissible.

Outwardly the terms of the pact were a victory for the Socialist point of view. The Communists, however, were not concerned with the formal aims of the new United Front (which to them was only a tactical maneuver) but in the achievement of united action and the creation of a joint unity committee to enable them to reach the Socialists and unorganized elements on more favorable ground. They were confident that the advantage they held because of their tight discipline,



as compared to the weak organization of the Socialists, would inevitably result in gains for themselves.

In the meantime, France continued under a rightist government. Doumergue, having attempted to assume powers which would have placed him beyond the control of Parliament and prepared the way for a Fascist revolution, was driven from office. He was succeeded by Flandin, a Centrist, and then by the reactionary, though more circumspect, Laval. Under these men the Fascist leagues continued unchecked, while the economic situation worsened because the "200 Families" and the big financiers refused to let the government take the necessary measures, insisting instead on monetary deflation and wage cuts.

The Communists had achieved a measure of success in persuading the Socialists to form a United Front, but this was not enough. Together the two parties still could not hope to dominate the political scene. The Communists turned their attention to the problem of bringing in more rightist groups, especially the Radicals (or Radical Socialists). The Radicals, representing chiefly peasant proprietors, small traders and manufacturers, and other elements of the middle class, disliked both the Communists and the Socialists as well as the Fascists. The Socialists were afraid to compromise their socialism by any cooperation with the Radicals. Yet, unless labor could cooperate with the Radicals, rightist elements would remain in power and Fascism would continue to grow. Unless brought into cooperation with more leftist parties, the Radicals had no alternative except to support rightist elements. The existence of the United Front made cooperation with the Radicals more palatable to the Socialists, since if they were to undertake such cooperation without the Communists, many of the more leftist Socialists might well go over to the Communists.

The first Communist move to bring in the Radicals came during the cantonal elections of August 1934, when the Communists announced that they would vote for Radicals on the second ballot where warranted. On 9 October, Thorez, the FCP leader, changed the name of the movement from the United Front to the Popular Front to attract the Radicals. The Radicals as well as the Socialists were reluctant to engage in joint political action with the Communists, but increasing support for such a policy among the rank and file members of the two parties caused the leaders to consider such a course when they realized that such a trend could not be denied.

A further common meeting ground was created by the signing of the Franco-Soviet Pact in May 1935. The Radicals

had favored rearmament while both the Socialists and Communists opposed it. During Laval's visit to Moscow to sign the pact, Stalin and Laval issued, on 15 May 1935, a joint statement to the effect that Stalin approved French measures of defense. The FCP then dropped its opposition to rearmament as did the Socialists, although the latter still included an important pacifist bloc. The split in the Socialist Party and in the CGT over this issue weakened them and thereby made cooperation more imperative than ever.

The municipal elections of May-June 1935 assured the Communists of final success in their efforts to establish a Popular Front. There was close cooperation between the Socialists and Communists and, in many places, between these two and the Radicals and other leftist groups. The elections were a success for the leftists, but within the bloc the Communists gained at the expense of the Radicals and Socialists. Thereafter it was clear to the latter two groups that they would have to support a Popular Front or risk defeat in the coming national elections. Especially significant was the election result in the 5th Arrondissement of Paris, a moderate quarter, where a Professor Rivet, an anti-Fascist candidate, won over Lebecq, a Nationalist candidate and the hero of the 6 February incident.

On 30 May, while the elections were still in progress, the Communists forced the issue by securing acceptance of their demand for the creation of a tripartite representation of left wing parties in the Chamber of Deputies, and the new Joint Parliamentary Committee met for the first time that day. The new alliance of Radicals, Socialists and Communists was next formally asserted on 14 July 1935, when the traditional Bastille Day celebration was conducted jointly. Between 300,000 and 400,000 people marched from the Place de la Bastille to the Place de la Republique, singing the Marseillaise and the Internationale, carrying the Tricolor and the Red Flag, led by Daladier, Blum, and Thorez. Two weeks later, the election victory was celebrated at a meeting where Paris witnessed the unusual sight of the three men speaking from the same platform.

The political situation resulting from the May-June elections and the renewed activity of the Fascist groups, especially the Croix de Feu, following Laval's assumption of the premiership, eliminated the last Socialist resistance. The Socialist Party convention, meeting in Mulhouse in the fall of 1935, approved political cooperation with the Radicals and the Communists and the establishment of a Popular Front.

The Radical Party convention ended in the same result though only after considerable disagreement and controversy

between those urging a union with leftist forces and the more reactionary bloc which desired continued support of the Laval government. To the former--the group led by Daladier and the anti-Fascists--it was clear that without unity the new Chamber would be like the old, and that whether Laval remained or was replaced by some other Centrist, the result would be a weak rightist government under which Fascism could continue to grow. The convention agreed, however, that Radical ministers should remain in the cabinet, provided Laval took action against the Fascist leagues. With respect to the Popular Front, the convention resolution did not mention it by name, but authority to join it was clearly given in a statement to the effect that "it the party welcomes with joy the powerful rally throughout the country determined to block the road to the enemies of the Republic--a rally which constitutes a wholesome and legitimate defensive front with which the Radical Party has loyally cooperated since July 14, 1935." 2/

On 18 January 1936, because of Laval's failure to deal effectively with the Fascist leagues, the Radical Executive Committee ordered its members to withdraw from and to oppose the Laval government. With the resignation of the Radical ministers on 22 January, the government fell. Albert Sarraut, a Senator, formed a new cabinet. The Popular Front group immediately began to prepare for the coming national elections, which they had every hope of winning, for they had the bulk of the French people behind them, while their opponents were an incoherent group of people with little or nothing to unite them except their opposition to the Popular Front.

The Popular Front program on which the election campaign was waged had been published on 11 January by what was known as the Comité Nationale de Rassemblement Populaire (National Committee of Popular Rally), which comprised ten organizations: League of the Rights of Man, the Vigilance Committee of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals, 3/ World Committee Against Fascism and War, 4/ Movement for Militant Action, the Radical Socialist Party, the Socialist Party, the FCP, the Socialist-Republican Union, the CGT, and the CGTU.

The program was divided into three sections. Under the title "Defense of Freedom," it called for a general amnesty; disarmament and dissolution of the Fascist leagues; measures for the purification of public life; measures to liberalize and control the press through publication of financial resources, repression of libel, and abolition of advertising monopoly; trade union liberties; measures to improve education; and the improvement of the economic, political and moral status of the colonies. With respect to "Defense of Peace," it called for international cooperation through the

League of Nations, support for collective security and automatic sanctions against aggressors, nationalization of war industries and prohibition of the arms trade, and repudiation of secret diplomacy. Economic aims were defined as restoration of purchasing power by such measures as establishment of a national unemployment fund, reduction of the work week without reducing the weekly wage, and institution of a public works program; elimination of the agricultural and commercial crisis by establishing a Cereals Board, revaluing agricultural prices, and strengthening agricultural cooperatives; reorganization of the credit structure through regulation of banking and reorganization of the Bank of France; and a financial purification program, to include such things as an investigation of war profits, establishment of a War Pensions Fund, tax reforms through the establishment of a progressive income tax and measures against tax evasion, and control of capital exports.

This program satisfied none of the participating parties completely, but it was one that all could support. The Communists frankly admitted that they agreed to it only because, for the moment, they could do no better. Speaking to the FCP VII Congress at Villeurbanne at the end of January 1936, Thorez stated:

The government of the People's Front will be a government which will stop the Fascist menace by disarming and effectively dissolving the armed bands; a government which will make the rich pay; a government which will rely on support in this twofold task on the extra-parliamentary activity of the masses and on the committee of the People's Front; ... it will be a government of the action of the working class and of its party, the Communist Party, a government which will allow for the preparation of the final capture of power by the working class.

As long as conditions do not allow us to set up a People's Front Government as we interpret the term, we have decided to support a government of the Left in carrying out a program in the interests, and according to the will, of the people of France; but we are no party of the bourgeoisie which has given any undertaking to join a bourgeois government. 5/

In the domestic field, the FCP emphasized a program that had sufficient validity to receive the backing of Socialists and Radicals, stressing especially the phrase "200 Families," which had first been used by Daladier. Thus the FCP "appeared for the first time not as a party of agitators under foreign direction but as a French party, participating in

the national defense and sharing the heritage of patriotism and of French revolution, as a party in the parliamentary sense and almost as a government party." 6/

The election 7/ was an overwhelming victory for the Popular Front, which won 368 of the 618 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, as against 232 for the various groups of the right. Of the three major Popular Front parties, the Socialists had 149 seats, the Radicals 109, and the Communists 72. 8/ While the Socialists emerged as the strongest single party, electing roughly 50 more deputies than in the previous national election, the Communists could consider the results a personal victory. For while the number of votes for the Socialists was almost exactly the same as in 1932, the Communists almost doubled their poll from 794,000 to 1,503,000. As for the Radicals, they not only polled approximately 400,000 votes less but lost roughly 50 seats. The Communist delegation, it may be noted, increased from 10 to 72.

#### B. The Life of the Popular Front

The immediate problem was to form a government, a task which fell without argument to Leon Blum, who, as the Socialist leader, headed the largest parliamentary group of deputies. It had been assumed that the Communists would participate in the government, especially in view of statements made by Thorez and other Communist leaders during the formation period of the Popular Front and during the election campaign, but this proved to be a mistaken assumption. The FCP decided that its leaders should not accept cabinet posts, though it pledged the government its support provided the Popular Front program was carried out. This equivocal and distrustful attitude of the Communists weakened the Blum ministry from its first day.

In a statement to the press on 6 May, Thorez and Duclos explained the decision by saying that "the presence of Communists in the government might be exploited by the enemies of the people and used as a pretext for scare campaigns, which could mean a weakening of the Popular Front." 9/ Actually, it was a clever political strategem designed to assure the Communists maximum political influence and opportunity to exploit the new situation to further extend the influence of the FCP over the French masses. By remaining out of the government, the Communists could exert a parliamentary veto over it, taking credit for all of its successes without being responsible for any possible failures. It also remained free to extend its contacts with labor, which, by a wave of major strikes, indicated that it expected changes

which the government was incapable of effecting. By lending support to the demands for such changes the FCP curried the favor of the masses away from their Socialist and Radical partners, who had to shoulder the blame for failing to institute them.

Blum was not unaware of the real reason why the Communists refused to serve in his cabinet and, in a speech on 30 May, before he was installed as premier, he declared:

I am being spoken of as a Kerensky who is preparing the way for a Lenin. I can assure you that this is not going to be a Kerensky government; and it is equally certain that if we fail we shall not be succeeded by a Lenin. 10/

It was a clear warning to the Communists that failure to support him would play into the hands of the Fascists. It failed to change the FCP policy, however, for the Communists knew that they could always cease their sabotaging tactics if they brought the government too close to the brink of disaster.

The cabinet was further weakened by the refusal of the influential Radical leader Edouard Herriot to serve. His great prestige would have strengthened the cabinet, but he preferred to serve as President of the Chamber. Blum also tried to persuade Leon Jouhaux, secretary general of the CGT, officially to participate in the government, 11/ but this the latter refused to do, reasserting the traditional CGT policy of avoiding direct political activity. The final composition of the cabinet included, besides Blum, 17 Socialists, including the Ministers of Interior, Colonies, Finance, National Economy, Pensions, Public Works, Mines and Electricity, Agriculture, Postal Services, and Labor and Public Health. Chautemps, a Radical, was Minister without Portfolio, and there were 12 other Radicals in the government, including the Ministers of National Defense, Foreign Affairs, Air, Justice, Education, and Commerce. The Communists, though not represented directly, had a direct channel into the cabinet in the person of Pierre Cot, a fellow traveling Radical, who was Air Minister.

The Blum ministry, upon taking office, was immediately faced with a major crisis, which the lame-duck Sarraut government had ignored during its last month of existence. This was the problem of the "sit-in" strikes which had started in May when 80 workers had occupied the Usines aircraft plant at Issy-les-Moulineaux. The movement spread in the provinces and, at the end of the month, to the Paris region, affecting metallurgical and engineering plants especially, and then back to the provinces again at the beginning of June.

The strikes were a new phenomenon in France. Similar strikes had occurred in Italy in 1920, but they were far from offering an exact parallel. The Italian strikes had been ordered by the trade unions, whereas those in France were the result of a spontaneous movement among the workers and the trade unions' main concern was to get them under control. The strikes had a real basis in the inadequate wages and working conditions of French workers generally, and, while the Communists aided and abetted the strikers--Communist deputies made speeches in occupied factories and Communist spokesmen curried the strikers' favor by declaring on all possible occasions that the correct way to solve the crisis was to grant all of the workers' demands--it seems clear that the strikes were not of Communist origin.

To some extent the Communists were actually embarrassed by the strikes. For while they did not hesitate to exploit them for their own ends, the Communists realized that they weakened the prestige of the new Popular Front regime with which the Communists were pledged to minimize class hatred and to maintain French national unity against Nazi Germany. When the strikes continued to threaten the stability of the Blum cabinet, Thorez declared on 10 June, after the Matignon agreement had been reached, that "it is important to know when to stop a strike, for otherwise you are playing into the hands of the reactionaries." <sup>12/</sup> When the strikes did let up shortly thereafter, the Communists were thus able to take credit, which they did not merit.

The strike wave was solved when the government imposed arbitration on employers and workers by the Matignon agreements, signed on 7 June at Hotel Matignon in Paris by Jouhaux for the CGT and Duchemin, president of the Confederation Generale de Production Francaise (CGPF - General Confederation of French Producers), the largest employer group in the Paris region. The agreements were a victory for the workers, providing for such gains as a 40-hour week, paid holidays, and recognition of collective bargaining. All these points were then embodied in a series of bills which were submitted to and immediately passed by the Assembly.

The strikes and their termination had both favorable and unfavorable results for the Popular Front. The left was stimulated by the new victory, while the trade unions, a major element in the Front, acquired millions of new members in the months that followed. The government's support of the workers did not alienate the bulk of the Front's non-Socialist supporters, who realized that the concessions were justified and saw in the strengthened trade union movement a new bulwark against Fascism. Nevertheless, a section of the Radical Party, headed by Caillaux, objected to the government's surrender to the workers even while realizing

that it could do nothing about it. The employers realized the necessity of giving way, at least momentarily, because the Popular Front was strong; but many of them resented having to consent to arrangements worked out only by the CGPF, which represented only a small segment of French employers.

The real winner was the FCP, which emerged as the spokesman for the French labor movement, with vastly increased prestige and influence. The FCP immediately used its new position to hasten the Communist take-over of the newly unified CGT (infra). The Communists openly demonstrated their power in September 1936, when they arranged a new wave of strikes partly to maintain and extend their mass influence but mainly to make their weight felt and to embarrass their partners. The strikes in this period all had four things in common: (1) they were started under Communist leadership or at least prompting; (2) they were neither large nor long-lasting, but created a never-ending feeling of uneasiness; (3) wherever possible they were "sit-in" strikes to inject a sense of revolutionary disorder; and (4) when the desired political effect had been achieved, they were abruptly broken off. The strikes left no doubt that the Popular Front had permitted the Communists to achieve in a few months undisputed control of the French labor movement.

The Matignon agreements and the subsequent labor legislation were only a beginning to a solution of France's labor problems, because social reforms, once enacted, are not treated in France as definitive even by the defeated party. The employers pursued a ruthless policy of counter-attack and delay, which was bound to succeed since real wages were dependent upon the general economic situation. The fact that the Front had no real coherent economic policy hampered, from the beginning, all of its efforts. Since strict controls and basic reforms were blocked by the joint opposition of Radicals and Communists and a rise in productivity was blocked by the flight of capital and the 40-hour week, the wage increases won by workers at Matignon could have only an inflationary effect. Consequently, the franc had to be devalued twice. It was good propaganda for the Communists to protest against these devaluations which their own attitude had helped to bring about.

As a result of the decline of the general economic situation and a rise in the cost of living, real wages, by the middle of 1938, were down to the level preceding Matignon, while production had declined by 25 per cent as compared with 1930. Earned wages and salaries, which were 87.4 billion francs in 1935, had risen to 133 billion by 1938, a rise of 52 per cent. But between November 1935 and November 1938, the cost of living had risen by 55 per cent. The rise



in the cost of living and the fall in real wages was the inevitable result of two devaluations in a single year which had reduced the value of the franc by 50 per cent. Moreover, the wage increase obtained under the Matignon agreements was more apparent than real. The agreements called for a 35 per cent increase, but because of the shorter work week, the actual gain was about 12 per cent.

The disastrous effects of inflation and decreased production were aggravated by the fact that France at this point was hit by the end of the depression which had largely bypassed her at the beginning of the decade. The situation was due in large part to Communist tactics. Knowing that without controls, which they consistently opposed, it was mere pretense to talk of making the rich pay and, at the same time, doing their best to launch ever new wage demands, the Communists deliberately sought inflation, decline of real wages, and a consequent intensification of the class struggle. In short, they really did not want the Popular Front government to succeed. They could take credit with the workers for supporting new wage demands, while blaming their Socialist and Radical partners for the deterioration of the economic situation which resulted. The prestige of the Communists was further enhanced and that of their partners lowered when the government, obliged to enforce the laws of France, had workers ejected from a number of occupied plants in October 1936, during a new wave of Communist inspired strikes. The Communists, of course, violently protested this "betrayal" of the Front's programs.

In September 1936, the major Communist action was a 24-hour protest against non-intervention in Spain (*infra*), which proved tantamount to a general strike of the Paris armaments industry, and thus was a warning to the government that the Communists could make France helpless against an enemy. At the same time, strikes were organized in the northern textile mills, with occupation of plants. The plants were cleared, but when the workers returned the government could not act, for the Communists threatened to withdraw their support and this would have caused the fall of the government. A solution to the impasse in the form of a six per cent wage increase only kindled unrest and a new wave of wage demands all over France while, at the same time, it produced a new flight of capital and a further drop in the franc abroad.

The consequences were immediately apparent. On 24 September the Bank of France raised its discount rate from three to five per cent, and on the following day the franc was devalued. The latter step had been long overdue. The Communists protested violently, but they also objected to the introduction of controls. The situation provided the clearest possible picture of Communist duplicity. While

they incited the workers, they also supported the financiers. The Communists had made the safeguarding of the franc one of the specific promises in return for which they gave support to the Blum ministry in the Chamber on 5 June. On 25 September, the very day that the franc was devalued, L'Humanite, in discussing the question of devaluation, wrote that "It goes without saying that our Communist Party remains and always will remain firmly opposed to any operation of this kind, and will demand the severest measures against the instigators of such an offense." Yet the Communists joined in the Chamber vote approving devaluation.

The Blum Government did its best to carry out the other economic points of the Front program.. The Bank of France was reorganized and reformed. Its Council of Regents, previously elected by the 200 largest stockholders, was brought under governmental control. Nationalization of the arms industry was begun by Pierre Cot, Air Minister, who nationalized the military aircraft industry, forcing Daladier, War Minister, to follow suit with munitions factories. New regulations were established to control prices, especially those of necessities, while an effort also was made to set a minimum level for wholesale agricultural prices. A series of tax reforms was instituted.

Blum also carried out the Front pledge to dissolve the Fascist leagues, but the effectiveness of this step was more apparent than real. De la Rocque, for example, simply regrouped his followers of the dissolved Croix de Feu into a new party called the French Social Party (Parti Social Francaise). In addition, a new extreme nationalist group, the Cagoulaards, made its appearance. The rightist and Fascist press continued in existence and waged a campaign against leftist leaders so vitriolic and slanderous that one of Blum's colleagues--Roger Salengro, Minister of the Interior--was driven to suicide.

On 16 March 1937, the French Social Party staged a rally in a movie theater in the Paris suburb of Clichy. Although it was a quiet affair for which proper police authorization had been obtained, the Communists attempted to disrupt it, considering it an open provocation since Clichy was a known leftist quarter in which de la Rocque had few if any supporters. A clash between Communist led crowds and police resulted in six persons killed and several hundreds injured. The leftists, especially the Communists, were enraged that the police, under a Socialist government, would fire on the populace to protect Fascist activity. Thorez violently denounced "governments of the Left, which pursue a policy of the right." 13/

The first open break between Blum and the Communists, however, came over the issue of intervention in Spain. The French government was bound by treaty to supply war goods to the Spanish government. The British government, however, exerted pressure on Paris not to sell munitions to Spain but instead enter a non-intervention agreement, fearing that otherwise the Fascist powers would intervene directly. Succumbing to this pressure and realizing that above all else the French people were afraid of war, the Blum cabinet imposed an embargo on arms shipments to Spain. This move, though taken reluctantly by the Socialists, was warmly supported by the Radicals.

The Communists, bitterly opposed to the embargo, demanded that the policy be reversed on threat of withdrawal from the Popular Front. These threats were countered by Blum's threat to resign if they did. Since the Blum government was, in Communist eyes, still better than any possible alternative, they did not dare carry out the threatened secession. But on 5 December 1936, in a vote of confidence on the Spanish issue, the Communist deputies abstained, the first such action since the Front had taken office. The Communists announced that although they disagreed with the government's Spanish policy, they would support it loyally in all other matters. The incident nonetheless showed how shaky the Front coalition really was.

In January 1937, the Blum government found itself confronted with a major economic crisis. The draft budget presented to parliament on 2 January totalled 73 billion francs, of which only 43 billion were covered. Production was falling, especially coal production as a result of Communist maneuvers in the northern industrial regions. As a measure to save the government and prevent a further deterioration of the country's economic position, Blum announced a "pause"--a temporary freezing of further expenditures and further reforms. In the next two months the "pause" was implemented by the abolition of restrictions on the gold trade, the cancelling of six billion francs of expenditures on public works, a rise in railway tariffs, and the entrusting of currency policy to four non-party experts as a move to restore confidence in the franc.

The Communists reacted violently, bitterly accusing Blum of betraying the Front program. Even before the implementation measures had been taken, they launched a new strike wave involving workers all over France, which only served further to aggravate the economic situation. In March, the Communists found a new means of harassing the government. Being in unchallengeable control of the building workers, the Communists were able to sabotage preparations for the

Paris exhibition, on which the national and international prestige of the government depended. At the construction site, the Communists started a series of strikes following one upon another, so that when one was settled the next would start. The exhibition was finally opened but only after a three-week delay and with most of the buildings still incomplete.

During this period, the Communists did not confine their harassment tactics to the labor scene. One writer has described the period as follows:

The communists were constantly requesting the holding of joint socialist-communist demonstrations. There would be lengthy negotiations. A joint program would be worked out, speakers appointed, slogans fixed, and pledges taken by both sides not to raise certain controversial issues. Then, almost invariably, these pledges were broken. The communist speakers, against their given word, would raise the issue of Spain, or the issue of the Front francaise, or some economic issue like 'let the rich pay.' There would be recriminations, conciliations, breaks, and then the game would begin all anew.... The socialists, on their side, became more acrimonious in their press, thus provoking bitter communist complaints.... In April 1937, when the Blum government was tangibly at the end of its tether, the communists started to boycott the socialist-communist committee of cooperation; not that it would have made much difference. 14/

### C. The Death of the Popular Front

All these developments served constantly to weaken the position of the Blum government. The downfall of the Blum ministry came in June 1937 as a result of economic problems. On the 15th Blum asked the Assembly to grant him emergency powers "for the recovery of public finance, as well as for the protection of savings, money, and the public credit." 15/ The Communists, though disliking the idea, were still unwilling to see the government fall, so they gave the proposals a last-minute endorsement. A group of Radical deputies, however, voted against Blum in the Chamber. In the Senate, always more conservative than the Chamber, a group of 80 Radicals led by Caillaux, who had been antagonistic ever since the Matignon agreements, refused to grant Blum the requested powers. As a result, Blum and his cabinet resigned on 21 June, after nearly 13 months in office.

The Communists had undermined and the Radicals had overthrown the government. To conceal their own responsibility

in the affair and also to give their Socialist enemies no respite, the Communists now began to denounce Blum's resignation as cowardice. On the 24th, Thorez, in addressing a Communist demonstration, attacked Blum for having given up at a time when the Communists had declared their willingness to enter the government.

The Communists had offered to join a government, preferably one including elements further to the right so as to form a Front Francaise or to form a government themselves. The first idea was anathema to the Socialists, while the second was impractical. The Radicals were by now no less disillusioned with their Communist allies than were the Socialists, and the proposal of Communist participation in the government was flatly rejected by the Radicals.

The Communists had gotten rid of Blum but had failed to secure a better position for themselves. They might now have voted against their "allies," might thus disrupt the Front completely and compel the formation of a government further to the right. But this would not have paid, for such a government would certainly not have been more friendly to them than the Blum government had been. There was no alternative, therefore, but to maintain their former position of supporting a Popular Front government while remaining outside the cabinet.

For all practical purposes, the fall of the Blum cabinet marked the end of the Popular Front, although succeeding governments under Radicals Chautemps and Daladier and, briefly, under Blum again were technically Popular Front cabinets. The Chautemps cabinet was essentially the old Blum cabinet with Chautemps and Blum merely having exchanged places, but the attitude of the Communists was somewhat friendlier since Chautemps, unlike Blum, had not taken part in the denunciation of the events which had been taking place in the USSR.

But Communist support was still in words only. Speaking on 24 June, Thorez said that the Chautemps government "can rest assured, like its predecessor, of the loyal support of the Communists to the extent it assures the defense of the social conquests of our people, the enactment of the still outstanding points of the Popular Front program, and a financial recovery at the expense of the rich." <sup>16/</sup> To make the point clear, the Communists, although France was on the brink of financial disaster, requested the immediate enactment of an old-age insurance scheme and a sliding wage scale, which could only have produced a runaway inflation. To facilitate the latter result, the Communists, in September, a few days after the price of wheat had been raised to 180 francs per quintal with their consent, requested a new raise in the wheat price

coupled with a forcible reduction of food prices, but at the same time opposing controls.

For the next few months the Communists kept relatively quiet. The results of the cantonal elections in October, which revealed a stagnation of Communist influence compared with 1936, had a sobering effect. But in December Communist inspired strikes again gripped all of France. Faced with the strike wave and the continuing currency crisis, Chautemps requested energetic measures of economy. On 13 January he spoke of "mysterious efforts of some obscure force" and threatened that "if some do not listen to my appeals, the force of law will strike them." On the 14th, Ramette, a Communist spokesman in the Chamber, counter-attacked, accusing Chautemps of abandoning the Popular Front program. In place of the premier's program of industrial peace and financial economies, he suggested a costly program of social reforms, including a sliding wage scale. Chautemps responded by declaring that "he returned to the Communists their liberty of decision." <sup>17/</sup> After that, there remained little practical importance to the Popular Front.

Complete rupture of the Front at this point was prevented by Blum who refused to continue in the government without Communist support. Chautemps resigned but when attempts to form a broader based cabinet proved unsuccessful, he reappeared on 18 January with a completely Radical cabinet, for which both the Communists and Socialists voted in the absence of any alternative.

The next crisis came quickly. When Chautemps asked for additional emergency powers to deal with the economic, financial and currency crises, the Socialists refused and the cabinet resigned. He was replaced by a Socialist-Radical government under Blum on 10 March.

The Communists treated Blum this time with undisguised hostility, for they regarded Socialists in general and Blum in particular as their worst enemies. They greeted the new government with a declaration that this was not the solution desired by the country, which could only be interpreted as an open challenge. To emphasize the point, the party launched the biggest of all its strike waves. By 7 April, Blum, opposed by both Radicals and Communists, resigned, technically as the result of Senate refusal to approve a tax on capital.

If the Popular Front had not ended with the Ramette-Chautemps exchange of January, the fall of the second Blum cabinet can certainly be said to mark its demise. The new government headed by Daladier, a Radical, was no longer dependent on Socialist and Communist votes. Although the Communists at first seemed to approve of Daladier--they brought the strikes to an end--

they soon embarked upon their old tactics. But the government, now firmly in the hands of conservatives, was no longer in a mood to tolerate Communist maneuvers. A dockers' strike in Marseille, called by the Communists, was broken by the use of Senegalese troops. In August Daladier publicly attacked the 40-hour week. Thus the Popular Front receded into the pages of history.

In considering the failure of the Front, three principal causes can be discerned. First, there are the Front's failures as regards foreign policy, especially in respect to Spain. The failure of the leftist government in France to resist the rise of Fascism in Spain alienated many of its own supporters while giving encouragement to the French Fascist movement. Sympathy for the rival forces in Spain further widened the breach between the French left and right, lending to French internal politics "a quality of ideological fanaticism such as had not been seen in France for a long time. It helped undermine the democratic foundations of the French government and morally to disarm France in the face of Fascist aggression." 18/

A second cause was the internal policy of the Soviet Union. The vast 1937-1938 purges of the party administration and armed forces bewildered potential Soviet friends among the masses, while they made military leaders doubt the value of the USSR as an ally, which, in turn, strengthened the arguments of the appeasers. Moreover, the purges served to strengthen the mounting anti-Communist sentiment among the Radicals, who formed an integral and necessary part of the Popular Front.

Most important, however, was the mutual suspicion and lack of good faith existing between the Communists and their partners. The Communists, from the beginning, continued their demagogic agitation against the Socialists and other political groupings. They never stopped trying to win the Socialist and democratic masses away from their leaders. Their maneuvers to take all the credit for the Front's successes but none of the blame for its failures served to increase the mutual dislike and distrust.

The Popular Front never functioned efficiently or as originally envisaged. The Committee of Coordination, set up in July 1934 to carry out the terms of the United Action Pact, never became operative. The Committee of Cooperation, formed after the Blum government took over in June 1936, did not meet until 8 December of that year and thereafter held only a few meetings. According to one French political writer, it was the constant Socialist policy to state "we shall not continue to discuss things with you [Communists] unless you previously return to the status quo, unless you first disavow this insult or that injury; the Communists, on their side,

tried to wriggle out of the situation by delaying a decision ... and then to start the whole game over again." 19/

The failure of the Front to solve adequately the pressing economic and financial problems was due in large part to the sabotaging activities of the Communists. The constant strikes arranged by the Communists, their refusal to agree either to devaluation or to controls, and their sponsorship of constant demands for wage increases, in addition to all the other Communist measures and maneuvers referred to above made it impossible for the government really to come to grips with the problem and to take the drastic measures which alone would have been effective.

Throughout the first Blum cabinet, the Communists consistently acted in ways designed to undermine the position of the Socialist leader. The denunciation by Blum of the purges in the Soviet Union especially incurred the wrath of the Communists, who retaliated by accusing him constantly of betraying the objectives of the Front.. More personal attacks also were not neglected. For example, on 26 August 1936, the Communist press attacked Blum for special honors allegedly conferred on Hjalmar Schacht, the German financial dictator, on the occasion of his visit to Paris. Actually Schacht had been ignored to the extreme limit compatible with diplomatic decorum, but this fact did not deter the Communists.

On 29 November, in a speech at St. Etienne, Thorez declared that "the fate of the Popular Front is not tied to the existence of one specific cabinet." 20/ This was an open stab in the back of Blum. The wave of strikes in January 1937 in connection with Blum's call for a "pause" was a more open attempt to get rid of him. Yet at the same time a Communist writer declared without apparent embarrassment that:

It seems appropriate to us to renew our declaration of unflinching loyalty to the Popular Front at this moment when certain of our companions of our struggle still reproach us for our refusal to take our share in the cabinet. This, as these comrades well know, is not a question of principle but simply of opportunity. 21/

Another example of Communist duplicity is their attitude towards the Front Francaise ideas. While still proclaiming loyalty to the Popular Front, Thorez, as early as 6 August 1936, called for a shift from a Popular Front to a Front Francaise, which implied a repudiation of the limitations of the Popular Front and a rejection of the struggle of a militant left against the right. The Socialists recoiled from the idea because they had joined the Front on the assumption that it would strengthen republican militancy, not



dissolve it into an amorphous national union with indeterminate goals. To smooth ruffled Socialist feelings, the Communists agreed to refrain from using the slogan. A letter written by the FCP in September contained the sentence:

Intent as always upon avoiding anything which, by word or action, might impair the fraternal ties between communist and socialist workers, and so as to avoid mutual polemics which could only serve the enemies of the working-class, we are prepared to abstain from using the term Front francaise. 22/

Nevertheless, the Communists unconcernedly continued to make propaganda for and to use the term Front Francaise.

While the reasons for the Front's failure are thus fairly clear, the results of the experiment are less easy to evaluate. One immediate effect was to arrest the growth of the Fascist groups, although the danger posed by them was greatly exaggerated at the time. Moreover, the economic chaos resulting from Popular Front vacillation and from the inflation-wage increase cycle fostered by the Communists did more to weaken France and prepare her for future collapse than the Fascists could ever have hoped to do.

The most far-reaching result, which remains even to the present day, was the extension of Communist influence. When the Popular Front movement began, the Communists, though their influence was not to be slighted, were not a formidable factor in French political life. But the opportunities afforded them during the Front era permitted them to reach unprecedented heights. Much of this position was lost with the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact and the outbreak of war, but the foundation remained which, coupled with the prestige gained by their wartime underground role, permitted a rebuilding of the Communist position after the liberation.

The labor movement was virtually taken over in its entirety. French labor had traditionally avoided active participation in political affairs, and had conducted its strikes solely for economic reasons. The Communists changed that. As their influence in the CGT grew, they manipulated the unions as they pleased, launching strike waves solely to bring pressure on the government or to help bring about the economic chaos and collapse they desired. To be sure, most strikes had an alleged economic motive, but the real political reasons were always discernible. By August 1938, during the strikes called in protest against the Daladier government, the Communists, in contrast to their previous conduct, no longer attempted to conceal their objectives and frankly declared that "our party approves unreservedly the action of the workers in their common

struggle for their rights and for a return to the Popular Front program." 23/

The FCP also was able to extend its influence among the peasantry. During the Front period, the Communists bombarded the government with bills to aid the peasantry. They preached peasant unity and sought to merge their Confederation of Tilling Peasants with the Socialists' National Peasant Confederation, and organized demonstrations like the National Peasants' Day. Communists living in villages were urged to join that village organization which contained a majority of local peasants, whether reactionary or progressive in leadership, and whether called a cooperative union or a hunting and fishing club. The infiltration tactics employed during this period may explain, at least in part, the sizeable support which the FCP today receives in rural areas.

#### D. The Trade Union Merger

The growth of Communist influence during the Popular Front period was nowhere more extensive than in the French trade union movement. When the events which led eventually to the Popular Front first began in 1934, the Communists had but small influence in the labor movement, which they exercised through the relatively unimportant CGTU. At the end of the period, they dominated the labor movement, having gained control of the new CGT which resulted from a merger of the CGTU and the Socialist-led CGT. Although briefly interrupted by the events of the war, this influence essentially persisted so that in the post-war period, non-Communist trade unionists found it necessary once again to split the French labor movement in order to gain freedom of action and to escape Communist manipulation for political purposes.

The merger of the CGT and CGTU paralleled the developments that led to the agreement among the Communists, Socialists, and Radicals to establish the Popular Front, and the two trends exerted a mutual influence. The progress towards the creation of a political alliance facilitated the labor merger, while the latter further encouraged the political agreement.

As with the political side of the question, the initiative for labor unity came from the Communists, who felt, correctly, that unity would permit them to extend their influence among the workers. The idea was not a new one. Negotiations to that end had occurred before but had always failed when the Socialists and Communists were unable to agree on a basis for unity. During the period involved here, success was possible because the Communists decided to sacrifice technical and

ideological demands for the sake of achieving the desired end. In fact, when unification was finally on the verge of realization, the major opposition appeared within the FCP itself from vested interests in its trade union section, i.e., from Communist trade union-party officials who objected to the terms under which the merger was to occur since they meant, for them, loss of personal stature and power.

From early 1933, Communist policy had been to encourage the creation of autonomous unions outside both the CGT and CGTU. The Communists now changed their policy to one of advocating the merger of similar groups of the CGT and CGTU, unit by unit, from the smallest local unit upward. This was a shrewd tactical move, for the workers themselves, unconcerned by the problems and value of ideology, saw no reason why a unified movement should not be formed. As in the case of the political agreement, support for unification was stronger among the rank and file than among the leaders.

The Communists wanted the governing boards of the new groups formed by the merger of CGT and CGTU units to have equal representation from both groups. This was quite unacceptable to Jouhaux and his CGT colleagues, for the CGT groups were, in almost all cases, larger than their CGTU counterparts. At a meeting on 5 October 1934, called to consider the proposed unification, the CGT National Board supported Jouhaux on this point, and also insisted on continued CGT membership in the Amsterdam International--<sup>24</sup>/anathema to the Communists--as well as on a pledge by the Communists to stop their infiltration tactics.

Although reluctant to accept the CGT terms, the Communists were so desirous of securing acceptance of the principle of unification that they agreed to the CGT demands. On 9 October, therefore, the CGTU agreed to abandon its demands for equal representation, and suggested the creation of a joint commission to negotiate the details of unification.

By 18 March 1935, most of the problems had been solved, largely by concessions on the part of the Communists. The latter, for example, agreed to abandon the practice of "fractions" within unions and to forbid union leaders to hold party positions at the same time. When the Communist trade union leaders resigned their party offices in June 1935, CGT leaders declared that the road to unification was now open. The CGT convention in September 1935 approved the terms of unity, and the actual merger was effected at a joint convention held at Toulouse in February 1936. The new organization retained the name CGT.

Formally, it was a complete victory for the Socialists; fractions were forbidden; affiliation with the IFTU was continued;

the loose, decentralized structure of CGT was to remain unchanged; and unification was to proceed from the bottom up. Jouhaux remained as secretary general. Of the eight secretaries of the new CGT, six were Jouhaux men as against two Communists--Fachon and Racamond. The only major concession made by the Socialists to the Communists was the adherence of the CGT to the Popular Front, a reversal of the long CGT practice of avoiding direct political activity.

It was, however, a hollow victory for Jouhaux. The Communists had achieved their principal objective, unification, and in the months that followed they succeeded, either by clever maneuvering or by outright violation of the merger terms, to render meaningless the concessions they had made. The immediate response to the unification and to the benefits won for labor by the CGT under the Matignon agreements was a phenomenal growth in union membership as thousands upon thousands of workers joined the CGT. <sup>25/</sup> The old leadership was unequal to the problems raised by this influx. Jouhaux and his associates had relied on personal influence rather than on good administration and organization to control the workers. But their personal standing held no meaning for the masses of new members. When the old system failed, there was nothing to keep the rank and file in line.

It was not accidental that the CGT remained inactive during the wave of "sit-in" strikes with which Blum was forced to deal. Although the settlement of Matignon was negotiated by the CGT on behalf of the strikers, the strikes themselves were in no way under its control. In an attempt to reassert his position as the principal spokesman for French labor, Jouhaux formulated a program of social reforms for submission to the Chamber of Deputies, but even this modest program was trimmed as a result of pressure by his new Communist allies, who were chiefly interested at that point in extending their political influence to the right.

When the Matignon agreements left the workers still dissatisfied, it was Thorez who advocated that they return to work. The fact that the strikes ended almost immediately thereafter served to emphasize the new power of the Communists in the labor movement. During the Popular Front period, it was they who could launch and stop strikes at will and they were not at all hesitant about using this power.

The Communists fulfilled their promise to deactivate fractions within trade unions, but they achieved the same and even greater effect by other methods. They proceeded to organize factory nuclei, which were active daily in factory life, because fractions operated only in union meetings.

Thus the Communists were able to maintain constant close contact with the workers rather than only periodically.

The rule that union officials could not also hold party offices was soon ignored. During the Popular Front era, Communist deputies Croizat, Midol, Brout, Demusais, and Parsal held CGT positions, as did Semard and Paul Marcel, members of the Conseil General of the Department of the Seine. Communist deputy Coste was also president of the metal workers' union in the Paris region, with more than 200,000 members. Nedelec, secretary of the CGT federation of Bouches-du-Rhone, was also a member of the FCP's Central Committee. In contrast, the only violation of the rule by a Socialist was the case of Choussy, a deputy who was also second secretary of the federation of agricultural workers.

Although the Communists had abandoned their demand for equal representation, the concession proved not to be an important one. Once the merger had occurred, the individual industrial unions and departmental federations were free to determine their own rules and organization. In most cases, ex-CGTU men were given some representation on governing boards and paid staffs. However, the unions reelected their bureaus annually, and there was nothing to prevent the Communists from acquiring a majority of union offices as their influence grew, which in fact happened. Once the Communists had gained a foothold within a union, they could count on their tight discipline and singleness of purpose gradually to secure for them a commanding position. Wherever the Communists initially were in a minority, as was generally the case outside of Paris, they insisted that votes on issues not be counted but unanimity achieved for every decision, thus giving them an absolute veto power. Once in control, however, they discarded this principle and prevented, by strong-arm methods if necessary, the non-Communist members from raising their voices.

The case of Bouches-du-Rhone (Marseille) affords an excellent example of how the Communists took advantage of every opportunity to seize control of a union from their less shrewd Socialist partners. At the time of the merger, the CGTU was completely without influence in the Marseille region. Nevertheless, as a gesture of good will, the CGT appointed one Communist as a secretary of the departmental federation and another as editor of the departmental CGT periodical. When an election of new officers was held six months later, the treasurer and several other CGT men were replaced by Communists. Thereupon the departmental secretary general resigned in protest, to be replaced by a Communist. Thus, in less than a year, the Communists advanced from a position of relative unimportance to one of complete control.

The same process was repeated elsewhere many times. On the national level, the Communists first gained control of two of the most important unions--engineers and building trades--and also increased their influence among railway workers. Before the Popular Front era came to its final demise, they controlled 12 of 30 national unions, including chemical, textile, electrical, leather, and agricultural workers. They controlled the regional unions of the Seine (Paris), the Lower Seine (Le Havre and Rouen), the Somme (Amiens), the Lower Rhine (Strasbourg), and dominated the entire Mediterranean coast and the Alpine region north to Grenoble.

As the Communists gained control of the labor movement, they called strikes at will and for political purposes, the effects of which were to a large extent responsible for the inability of the Front governments to solve the economic and financial problems facing the country. Never before or since had French labor counted for so much in French politics. At the same time, it must be recognized that this influence was due less to any inherent strength of labor than to the weak forbearance of the Popular Front governments.

The decline began in April 1938 when Daladier assumed the premiership. The great strike then in progress in the aircraft industry ended in a few days. The employers, accepting the suggestion of a government they regarded as their own, granted a further rise in wages while the unions conceded the introduction of a 45-hour week in the industry, a tremendous concession, since once this first breach was made in the 40-hour week, it could not last much longer as a national institution.

On 21 August Daladier publicly attacked the 40-hour week as a hindrance to serious rearmament which the international situation showed to be necessary. On 21 October he published a series of emergency regulations which practically abolished the 40-hour week. The Communists attempted strong counter-moves. On 17 November, Communist led workers occupied the Renault works, but the days of unpunished law-breaking were over and that same night the gardes mobiles stormed the Renault plant with the help of tear gas. On 22 November, the Communists, showing their hand in a field hitherto closed to them, carried a considerable section of the miners of the north with them into an occupation of the mines. Military forces were immediately employed to clear the mines.

The 21 October decrees also were the start of Communist agitation for a general strike. The move gained momentum with the factory occupations and with the use of armed forces against workers. The Socialist faction within the

CGT opposed the idea. However, when the Communists threatened to withhold from the CGT the financial contributions of all Communist controlled unions, Jouhaux and his followers gave in even though they knew the futility of the move, could foresee the probable disastrous consequences to the CGT, and realized that it was in the nature of an act of revolutionary insurgency against their country at a moment of great danger.

The strike failed, for it had been grossly mismanaged. Having been announced five days in advance, it found the government fully prepared. The workers, too, had time to think. Although the strike was allegedly in defense of the 40-hour week, everyone believed that it actually was directed against Munich and that it was a strike for war. But not all the workers were for war, nor were all of them even in favor of a 40-hour week. Since their real wages had declined with inflation and unemployment was growing, many workers, particularly those in the armament industry, welcomed the rearmament drive and the extra earnings provided by longer hours. Moreover, on the eve of the strike, the government requisitioned railways, public utilities, and the more important mines, so that the CGT secretly advised workers to appear at the plants on the day of the strike but to refuse to work. This plan was foiled by the presence of police at the plants. As the result of these factors, the strike was a complete failure.

The effects on the CGT were catastrophic. Membership had slowly been declining since 1937, but now, at one stroke, millions tore up their membership cards. Although the CGT never revealed officially the extent of its losses, membership reportedly fell in a few weeks from 5,300,000 to 2,000,000. The organization also lost its privileged position within the state. Jouhaux was dismissed from the board of directors of the Bank of France, and the two union representatives from the board of the National Railways. In protest, the CGT withdrew its representatives from all governmental and joint employer and union boards, thus saving their opponents the trouble of expelling them. Thousands of active unionists were dismissed from their jobs. The Communists had thus been hoisted on their own petard, for the labor movement was no longer an instrument of power. 26/

The united labor movement, now gravely weakened, came to an end in 1939 with the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, which disgusted French workers as it did other segments of the French people. As soon as war broke out, the regional union of the north, the miners' federation, and the unions of postal employers, telephone and telegraph workers, and seamen began to exclude prominent Communist members. At the CGT's National Council meeting in September, Communists were expelled from both the leadership and ranks of the CGT, while

Communist locals and unions at every level were expelled from organizations affiliated with the CGT. The criterion applied was whether or not the person or organization condemned the German-Soviet Pact.

At the end of September the government legally dissolved the FCP and its affiliated organizations. With respect to the labor movement, the CGT found it necessary in many cases to dissolve existing unions and to create new ones, while in other instances the government itself dissolved unions by decree.

The Communists had now been stripped of their influence over French labor, while the Socialists regained their preeminent position. But this situation lasted only four years. In 1943, as a result of their efforts within the resistance movement, the CGT readmitted the Communists who then rapidly regained their former position, partly because of their discipline and abundant supply of trained labor leaders, and partly because Socialist prestige had been weakened when CGT leader Rene Belin became Minister of Labor in the Vichy government.

Until March 1945, the anti-Communists had a five to three majority on the top CGT committee, but Communist control of the major industrial unions--miners, railway, metal, chemical, textile, food trades, agriculture, building trades--as well as of the big regional unions, forced a grant of parity on the Comite Confederal National and the creation of the post of co-secretary general, which was given to Communist Benoit Fachon. At the 1946 convention, the first since 1938, 75 per cent of the delegates were controlled by the Communists, who permitted the non-Communist bloc to keep parity on the Comite Confederal but took 20 of the 35 seats on the Administrative Committee. But even the Comite Confederal parity was more apparent than real, for of the six seats allotted to the Jouhaux faction, two were held by fellow travelers, thus assuring the Communists of undoubted control.

With the mounting tensions of the cold war, the Communists, as they had done during the Popular Front era, began to use the CGT as a political instrument, calling strikes to undermine the government and to oppose policies which the FCP considered hostile to its Soviet masters. The blatant use of the unions in late 1947 to attempt to force France to reject Marshall Plan aid disgusted many French workers to the extent that they preferred to split the labor movement than remain Soviet puppets. As a result, a large segment led by Jouhaux seceded to form the Confederation Generale du Travail-Force Ouvriere (CGT-FO - General Confederation of Labor-Workers' Force), while an even larger group, estimated as high as two million, left the CGT but did not join either the CFT-FO or any other group.



It seems clear that although the FCP lost its control of French labor at the outbreak of war in September 1939, it was the position gained during the Popular Front era which enabled it so easily to again capture the CGT after being re-admitted during the war. It is, therefore, in this field where the real significance is to be found--and the real tragedy--of the French experiment with the Popular Front.

APPENDIX A

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Although much has been written on the Popular Front concerning its mechanics and accomplishments, there is almost a complete absence of studies specifically oriented to show the dangers and disadvantages of the Socialist and Radical attempt to work with the Communists within the framework of the Front. The only pertinent writing along this line are chapters V and VII of Franz Borkenau's European Communism (New York, 1953), which have been extensively used in the preparation of this paper. A former member of the German Communist Party, Borkenau was, from 1921 to 1929, employed in the Comintern's Western European Branch. Since that time, although no longer a Communist, he has continued to follow Communist activities in Europe. Since his entire book is designed as an expose of Communist machinations and dangers, his chapters on the French Popular Front are revealing as to Communist duplicity.

There are several books which examine the Popular Front critically, assigning blame to all parties rather than to the Communists alone. Gaetan Bernoville's La Farce de la Main Tendue (Paris, 1937) and Paul Lombard's Quatorze Mois de Demence: l'Experience Leon Blum (Paris, 1937) can profitably be read in this connection. The most bitter attack is perhaps Reginald Dingle's Russia's Work in France (London, 1938), which is designed primarily as a defense of the French Fascistic groups such as the Croix de Feu, etc. The author's political views can perhaps best be judged from the fact that he vigorously defends the courage and honesty of the scandal-mongering Gringoire whose vicious attacks drove Interior Minister Roger Salengro to suicide.

Alexander Werth, a British journalist who was in France during the Popular Front era, has written the following accounts of the Popular Front: Which Way France? (New York, 1937); The Twilight of France, 1933-1940 (New York, 1942); "The Front Populaire in Difficulties," Foreign Affairs XV (July, 1937), pp. 608-618; and "After the Popular Front," Foreign Affairs XVII (October, 1938), pp. 13-26. Three other useful articles are: "Le Front Populaire," Fortune XV (June, 1937), pp. 82-91; Walter Sharp's "The Popular Front in France," American Political Science Review XXX (October, 1936), pp. 857-883; and "France Under the Popular Front," Round Table XXVIII (December, 1937), pp. 44-61. A French Catholic view of the Popular Front is given in Yves Simon's The Road to Vichy, 1918-1938 (New York, 1942); while Jacques

Bardoux, a senator from Puy-de-Dome, sees the Front as a Marxist, as distinct from Communist, experiment in his book L'Ordre Nouveau (Paris, 1939).

In view of the close relationship between the Popular Front and trade unionism, most of the above-cited works touch at least to some extent on the CGT-CGTU merger and other aspects of the CGT's role in the Popular Front. For more detailed information on the French labor movement, the following works can be consulted: Henry Ehrmann, French Labor from Popular Front to Liberation (New York, 1947); Michel Collinet, L'Ouvrier Francais: Esprit du Syndicalisme (Paris, 1951); Robert Goetz-Girey, La Pensee Syndicale Francaise (Paris, 1948); Andre Delmas, A Gauche de la Barricade. Chronique Syndicale de l'Avant-Guerre (Paris, 1950); and Georges Lefranc, Histoire du Mouvement Syndical Francais (Paris, 1937). A short but informative article is Robert Dell's "Trade Union Experiments in France," Contemporary Review CLII (October, 1937), pp. 431-437.

APPENDIX B

NOTES

1. The building in which the Chamber of Deputies meets.
  2. Alexander Werth, Which Way France? (New York, 1937).
  3. An organization formed in late 1935 by the physicist Langevin, the anthropologist Rivet, and the philosopher Alain, which soon included a galaxy of leading intellectuals such as Gide, Picasso, Joliot-Curie, Julien Brenda and others. The original sponsors favored the Socialist Party but later shifted to the Popular Front. Many members later switched to the FCP.
  4. A pacifist, Communist-front organization also known as the Amsterdam-Pleyel Committee.
  5. Paul Lombard, Quatorze Mois de Demence: l'Experience Leon Blum (Paris, 1937).
  6. Mario Einaudi et al., Communism in Western Europe (Ithaca, 1951), p. 71.
  7. The first balloting was held on 26 April, the second or run-off voting on 3 May.
  8. Figures taken from Hugh Seton-Watson, From Lenin to Malenkov (New York, 1953), p. 181. No two writers seem to give exactly the same figures. For example, Werth, op. cit., says the Socialists won 149 seats, the Radicals 116, and the Communists 72. Martin Ebon, in World Communism Today (New York, 1948), states that the Popular Front won 375 seats of which 73 were held by the Communists.
- D. N. Pritt in The Fall of the French Republic (London, 1941), pp. 80-81, gives the election results as follows:

<u>Parties</u>	<u>Deputies Elected</u>		<u>Votes Received</u>	
	<u>1936</u>	<u>1932</u>	<u>1936</u>	<u>1932</u>
Rightist Groups	122	105	2,254,000	2,262,000
Center Groups	116	164	1,938,000	2,225,000
Leftist Groups:				
Radicals	116	158	1,461,000	1,805,000
Small Left Groups	36	66	518,000	511,000
Socialists	146	101	1,922,000	1,931,000
Communists	72	10	1,503,000	794,000
Others	10	11	95,000	85,000
	<u>618</u>	<u>615</u>		

An analysis of the returns by regions and by departments is given in J. W. Pickersgill, "The Front Populaire and the French Elections of 1936," Political Science Quarterly LIV (March, 1939), pp. 69-83.

9. See Ebon, op. cit., p. 180.
10. Werth, op. cit., p. 274.
11. French cabinet ministers were normally drawn from the Chamber and the Senate, but this was not a constitutional requirement.
12. Ebon, op. cit., p. 180.
13. Ibid., p. 181.
14. Franz Borkenau, European Communism (New York, 1953), p. 208.
15. Ebon, op. cit., p. 182.
16. Cited in Borkenau, op. cit., p. 210.
17. See Ibid., p. 211.
18. Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 182.
19. Maurice Paz, "Echec de 1936," Le Nef (June-July 1950), cited in Borkenau, op. cit., p. 192.
20. See Borkenau, op. cit., p. 205.
21. Ibid., p. 207.
22. Ibid.
23. Cited in Ibid., p. 215.
24. That is, the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), the international Socialist trade union organization.
25. Georges Lefranc in Histoire du Mouvement Syndical Francais (Paris, 1937), p. 471, says that the CGT grew from 1,024,000 on 1 March 1936 to 4,738,600 on 1 March 1937. The International Labour Review (August, 1937), p. 162, gives the figures of 1,165,265 in April 1936 as compared to 4,314,740 in December 1936.
26. Data on the general strike based largely on Borkenau, op. cit., pp. 218-219.

APPENDIX C

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